



Service learning as a developmental tool for STEM leadership

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Summary

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) partners with many Greater Houston non-profits to incorporate service learning as a community-building program with dual goals of undergraduate leadership development and service to the external community. This poster describes and outlines the goals associated with a STEM service learning program, implementation of the program, assessment of service impact, and leadership development from the program.

Downtown Houston experiences poverty levels above state averages. Geographically centered in downtown Houston, UHD experiences the effects of high poverty, such as, homeless shelters, transitional living centers, and at-risk public schools. UHD believes it can and must have impact on the community which surrounds it. The Scholars Academy (SA), a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) UHD program, supports its undergraduates in service through the *Serving to Lead*

program, and challenging its peer-mentored groups to “Pay It Forward” through active service projects. SA holds one aspect of its core mission to be the nurturing of philanthropic seeds of investment in ones community and people. Goals of *Serving to Lead*, as part of course requirements for SA members, are to introduce and reinforce, service learning through a course environment, to develop significantly leadership and identify the impact scientific leaders can have as leaders on their community. *Serving to Lead* encourages undergraduates’ clarity and understanding of the role STEM graduates can, and must, play as leaders within their communities through service.

References

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